

CHRIS PAPPAS
FIRST DISTRICT, NEW HAMPSHIRE

COMMITTEE ON
VETERANS' AFFAIRS

COMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORTATION AND
INFRASTRUCTURE

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Congress of the United States
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March 7, 2022

The Honorable Denis McDonough
Secretary of Veterans Affairs
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Ave, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20420

Dear Secretary McDonough,

In anticipation of the Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA) recommendations to the Asset and Infrastructure Review Commission (the Commission), I write to highlight the critical services VA facilities across New Hampshire provide to our veterans and strongly urge the VA to refrain from considering recommendations that would undermine their access to VA health care and services.

New Hampshire is home to more than 93,000 veterans who answered the call to serve their country. The best way to honor their service is to ensure they have access to the VA care, help, and services they have earned. Veterans make up around 10% of New Hampshire's population but the VA only has 9 facilities located in the state, including the Manchester VA Medical Center and Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs) in Conway, Portsmouth, Somersworth, and Tilton.

New Hampshire is currently the only state in the nation that does not have a full-service veterans hospital or equivalent access. I've visited many of these facilities and each of them provides critical services to Granite State veterans. In lieu of a full-service hospital, Manchester VA Medical Center provides primary care and specialty health services, including mental health services, long-term nursing care, palliative and hospice care, optometry, and prosthetics, and is planning to open a women's clinic in the near future. The Conway CBOC provides primary care, mental health services, and hosts unique telehealth capabilities for rural communities in New Hampshire's North Country. I recently toured the facility and met with doctors and staff who provide vital care to thousands of veterans in the Mount Washington Valley close to home.

These facilities are the foundation for VA infrastructure in New Hampshire and help guarantee veterans can access the health care and services they've earned. Many of our veterans live in rural communities and experience difficulties accessing public transportation, underscoring the need to maintain all of the CBOCs conveniently located throughout the state.

The zip code or county in which a veteran lives should not determine their level of access or quality of care. We owe veterans a tremendous debt and I am committed to ensuring no Granite State veteran needlessly faces another battle for the services and support they have earned when they return home. Accordingly, I strongly urge the VA to refrain from considering recommendations to the Commission that would undermine New Hampshire veterans' access to VA health care and services.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Pappas". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Chris Pappas
Member of Congress